

House Bill 398
February 8, 2007
Presented by M. Jeff Hagener
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Jeff Hagener, Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

HB 398 proposes to make taking an antlered moose, mountain goat, bison, or mountain sheep with a limited license or permit a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Currently, moose, goat, and sheep require a seven-year waiting period for anyone who receives one of these licenses before they can apply to hunt for that species again whether they take an animal or not. There is no waiting period for successfully drawing or taking a bison license. Under HB 398, a hunter could only take one of these animals in their lifetime, under a limited license or permit the seven-year waiting period would still apply for hunters who draw one of these licenses but who do not take an animal. From a management standpoint, FWP doesn't believe HB 398 will have any measurable change on management of the species or odds of drawing one of these coveted licenses.

BASED ON 2006 DRAWING INFORMATION

Species	Sex	No. Applicants	No. Licenses	% Success	Average Number of Years to Draw
Moose	Bull or Either Sex	21,600	476	2.2037%	45.38
Sheep	Ram or Either Sex	20,349	149	0.7322%	136.57
Goat	Either Sex	11,821	293	2.4786%	40.34
Bison	Bull or Either Sex	6,210	79	1.2721%	78.61

Statistically, this bill will have little impact on hunters. Based on the number of applicants for these coveted licenses, the odds of drawing one range from less than 1% to at best 2.5%. Given the seven-year waiting period for successful applicants before they can apply again, and the low odds of success, there are very few applicants for these licenses that would exceed a once-in-a-lifetime quota.

For those hunters who want additional chances to take these species, they could apply through the "Super Tag" lottery, which is not affected by HB 398.

To be consistent with the provisions contained in HB 38 introduced by Rep. McChesney, the once-in-a-lifetime provisions should not apply to cow/calf bison, antlerless moose, and ewe mountain sheep. FWP would be glad to work with the sponsor on a technical amendment to address this.